

# the SPIRIT

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024 | EASTER DAY

## Welcome, happy morning!

Welcome happy morning, age to age shall say! Thank you for joining us on the Day of Resurrection, the day we celebrate the boundless capacity of God's love—a love that not even the grave could hold. We are so glad you're here. If you are new to St. Stephen's Church or returning after time away, please take a moment to fill out a visitor card so that we can reach out and help you feel at home.

Today, we pull out all the stops: lilies and trumpets, organ swells and egg hunts, flowered crosses and hot cross buns. But the joy and promise of Easter—and its challenge, in some ways—is that every day is a new invitation for us to live transformed lives. This is true even and especially amidst the sorrows and struggles of the world. Wherever there is hurt, we are called to be agents of healing and ambassadors of resurrection. May you feel the good news of Easter deep in your soul this day, and may you go forth to share and embrace God's boundless love—for yourself and for a world in need.

THE REV. JOHN D. ROHRS, RECTOR

## We are so glad you're here

Welcome to today's celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. We are so glad to be together on this joyful day. **All are welcome at the altar at St. Stephen's Church.** If you would like to receive a blessing but not receive Communion, simply come forward with your arms crossed over your chest.

**Children are welcome at all of our services.** If you have a baby or toddler and would prefer to have them in **our nursery**, please know that it is available for the 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m., and 5:30 p.m. services, and is located on the basement level of the parish house. Children age 12 and younger are invited, with their parents, to an **Easter egg hunt after the conclusion of both 9 a.m. services.** Please meet on the sidewalk on the Grove Avenue side of the church and we'll all start together.

Informal receptions follow the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and a community supper follows the 5:30 service. You are invited!

## Ways to stay in touch



Are you visiting today? We'd love to stay in touch. Visit our website ([ststephensRVA.org](http://ststephensRVA.org)), social media (StStephensRVA), and/or fill out a visitor card; there should be one in the pew rack in front of you; or scan the QR code in the blue box in the lower right corner of this page.

The very best way to know what's happening and how to connect is to sign up for one or more of our email newsletters; the QR code on the left is the way to do that. We will never give your email address to any outside party and you may unsubscribe at any time. All of these newsletters are free and are available to everyone, not just to members. And please take the newsletter you're reading, the **Spirit**, home with you.

## Newcomer reception: you're invited

THURSDAY, APRIL 25 | 5:30-7:00 P.M.

The rector and staff of St. Stephen's host periodic receptions for those who are new to this community of faith, and the definition of "new" is up to you. If you've recently joined St. Stephen's, or you have been away for a season, or you have visited but have not yet decided whether to make this your church home, please come to the next reception. RSVP: [ststephensRVA.org/newcomers](http://ststephensRVA.org/newcomers).

## Are you new to St. Stephen's? Visiting?

We'd love to welcome you personally. It helps us get to know you better if you fill out a visitor card. If you prefer to do this digitally (or there's no visitor card near your seat), just scan the code and take it from there. If you take this newsletter home (we hope you will!) you can scan the code and complete the form later.







## Parish office, café closed Monday

The parish office will be closed tomorrow and will re-open Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. When the office is closed, so is our café—please come see us on Tuesday!

## Coffee, tea, free wifi, and art exhibits

TUESDAY-FRIDAY, 7 A.M.-11 A.M. | SATURDAY, 7 A.M.-NOON

The Café @ St. Stephen's is the perfect place to warm up on a chilly morning, and if the weather is balmy, you can enjoy our outdoor seating. Locally-roasted Rostov's coffee is freshly brewed, a variety of teas is available, and our baristas can make the full range of espresso drinks. Bagels, muffins, and other morning fare are also available. Enjoy the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, free wifi, and ever-changing art exhibits.

## Seeking staff for our nursery

We continue to seek new staff for our nursery. Do you know someone who might wish to apply for these crucial positions? Please send them to [ststephensRVA.org/employment](http://ststephensRVA.org/employment) for details.

Questions: Abby Kocher, [akocher@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:akocher@ststephensRVA.org)

## Shrine Mont waiting list available

RETREAT DATES: FRIDAY, JUNE 26 TO SUNDAY, JUNE 28

The annual parish weekend at Shrine Mont, our diocesan retreat center and camp, has filled up more quickly than usual, and we've started a waiting list. If you would like to attend, visit [ststephensRVA.org/shrine-mont](http://ststephensRVA.org/shrine-mont) for details and a link to the waiting list. The weekend will offer ways to re-engage our values, relationships, and conversations with God, and formation for all ages will be balanced with time for rest, relaxation, and recreation.

## Events for graduating seniors and families

SACRED PAUSE: APRIL 30 | 6-7:30 P.M.

SENIOR RECOGNITION: MAY 5 | 9 AND 11:15 A.M. SERVICES

We are excited to offer two events to celebrate and honor our graduating high school seniors.

**Sacred Pause** provides a unique and intimate way for families to share this sacred moment before the crunch of exams, graduation gatherings, and parties. This will take place **April 30, 6-7:30 p.m.** in the Café @ St. Stephen's and in the courtyard. Friends and extended family are most welcome.

**High school seniors will be specially recognized**, presented with gifts, and formally blessed by the congregation at both the 9 and 11:15 a.m. liturgies in the main church on **May 5**.

For more information and to register for these events, visit [ststephensRVA.org/seniors](http://ststephensRVA.org/seniors).

Questions: Caroline Harris, [charris@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:charris@ststephensRVA.org).

## Sunday morning formation for all ages: what's coming up

SUNDAYS AT 10:10 A.M.

Next Sunday, April 7, two of our Sunday morning formation offerings will resume, including an informal Bible study for youth (grades 6-12) that provides food for the soul AND for the stomach. No registration is needed; just come to Room 4 upstairs in the parish house. Friends are welcome.

The Sunday Forum meets in the fellowship hall, resuming April 7. See the next announcement for details of the three-part series beginning that day.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children through grade 5, and Many Parents, One Vine, a parenting support group, will return April 14.

All of these Sunday morning offerings begin at 10:10 a.m. and will continue through April 28 before taking a break May 5 for our annual bishop's visit.

On May 12, each of these will take place one last time before a break for the summer.



## A compelling focus for the Sunday Forum

APRIL 7, 14, AND 21 AT 10:10 A.M.

No images capture our religious hopes and fears more than heaven and hell, and no contrasts offer a more energetic basis for discussions of faith. But where do the themes of heaven and hell come from and why do they touch us so deeply? What truth do they hold for us as followers of Christ?

### APRIL 7: SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

The Rev. Dr. Sam Adams, an ordained Presbyterian minister and professor at Union Seminary in Richmond, will share key examples from the Hebrew scriptures of Jewish understandings of the afterlife and how they influenced the teaching of Jesus and the language and imagery he used (e.g. eternal life, kingdom of heaven, hell/Gehenna and the weeping and gnashing of teeth, etc.) as recorded in the gospel narrative.

### APRIL 14: HEAVEN AND HELL IN WESTERN LITERATURE: CASE STUDIES

Gardner Campbell, VCU professor and St. Stephen's parishioner, expands the scope of our discussion. For centuries, writers have imagined afterlives of perpetual blessedness or eternal damnation. Between the unknown of eternal bliss and the torments of loss and separation, these writers bring theological concepts to life in ways that can illuminate our daily lives as well as our devotion. We'll consider some of these representations in works by Dante, Milton, Blake, Dickinson, Moore, and C. S. Lewis.

### APRIL 21: GETTING SAVED IN AMERICAN RELIGION

Speaking in terms of a living faith, associate rector Bill Sachs will draw together the themes we have discussed. His focus will be on what "salvation" means for American Christians now. Does being a Christian center on going to heaven rather than being condemned to hell? The influence of evangelical religion has stamped faith and life for millions of people. What might this mean for us as Episcopalians today? Must we think in terms of heaven and hell to define who we are? This presentation will bring our Forum discussions home.

## A celebration of 50 years of women in the priesthood

FRIDAY, APRIL 26-SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024

On July 29, 1974, eleven women previously ordained as Episcopal deacons became the first women to be ordained as priests in the Episcopal Church. The service, which took place at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, was the culmination of a prolonged effort to break the "stained-glass ceiling" that prevented women from serving at the altar.

The 1974 ordinations were considered "irregular" since the General Convention of the Episcopal Church had not yet opened the priesthood to women. Three retired bishops presided over the liturgy to force the issue. The women, who came to be known as the Philadelphia Eleven, paved the way for the subsequent approval of the ordination of women to the

priesthood and episcopate at the General Convention held in Minneapolis in 1976. This summer marks the 50th anniversary of that groundbreaking moment, and at St. Stephen's Church we will commemorate the milestone with programs and special guests over the weekend of April 26-28. We will reflect on this history and on the experience of women in other careers and life circumstances, and welcome back several women who have served at St. Stephen's in the past.

Pick up a flyer at Information Central, the large table just outside the church office in the parish house, for details. Or visit [ststephensRVA.org/womens-ordination](http://ststephensRVA.org/womens-ordination). All events are free, but we ask you to register in advance.

## The neuroscience of addiction and recovery

THURSDAY, APRIL 18 | COFFEE HOUR, 6 P.M., PROGRAM, 7 P.M.

Dr. Kevin McCauley, a Senior Fellow at Meadows Behavioral Institute on Healthcare, will be at St. Stephen's April 18 to discuss the neuroscience of addiction and recovery. Dr. McCauley is a renowned authority on the neuroscience of substance abuse disorders. A 1992 graduate of Drexel University School of Medicine, he first became interested in the treatment of substance use disorders while serving as a naval flight surgeon. He has written and directed two films, "Memo to Self" about the concepts of recovery management, and "Pleasure Unwoven" about the neuroscience of addiction which won the 2010 Michael Q. Ford Award for Journalism from the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers. No registration is needed for this free event in the fellowship hall.

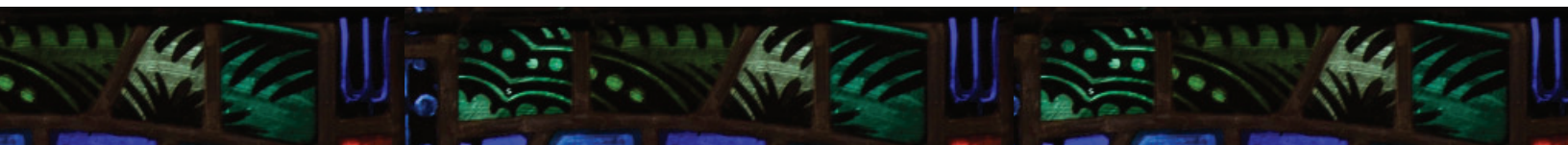
## Living Faithfully in an election year

APRIL 12-14

For many, looking toward the November 2024 presidential election inspires feelings of concern, fear, or anger. Citizens at various points on the political spectrum view the election as a battle for the soul of our nation. As Christians, this "battle" takes on an additional dimension: how does our faith inform our political engagement and decisions? Join Cate Anthony for "Sacramental Citizenship," a retreat for anyone wondering how to engage faithfully in an election year. The residential retreat takes place from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon at Roslyn; the event fee is \$200. Visit [ststephensRVA.org/sacramental-citizenship](http://ststephensRVA.org/sacramental-citizenship).

## Bishop Stevenson visits May 5

Each year St. Stephen's Church receives a visit from one of our bishops. This year the Rt. Rev. Mark Stevenson, our diocesan bishop, will visit on Sunday, May 5, to preach and celebrate the Eucharist at the 9 and 11:15 a.m. services, and to confirm, receive, or reaffirm adults and youth. This will be a moving celebration. Join us!







## Rebuilding Together Richmond

SATURDAY, APRIL 27 | 7:30 A.M.-5 P.M.

Take part in an annual opportunity to complete home repairs to ensure that everyone in Richmond has access to safe and healthy homes. You do not need to be skilled in home repairs to participate—but if you are, please let us know! The team will meet outside the Café @ St. Stephen's at 7:30 on Saturday morning to caravan to the build site together. Lunch will be provided. Bring a water bottle and wear sturdy shoes. Contact Anna Jones to sign up or ask questions, [ajones@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:ajones@ststephensRVA.org).

## 'Feed my sheep'

An important ministry of St. Stephen's Church is our "grocery store," a free, client-choice food pantry serving neighbors who need help feeding their families. On Saturdays, volunteers glean unsold produce, eggs and more from generous vendors at our farmers market. On Sundays, parishioners bring canned and boxed food for the pantry; during services these are presented at the altar along with our monetary offerings. On Mondays, we offer the food to those who need it. We also deliver fresh fruit to residents of low-income housing in Richmond. Consider bringing food each time you come to St. Stephen's and/or volunteering; contact Anna Jones, [ajones@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:ajones@ststephensRVA.org).



## Volunteers needed for gleaning on Saturdays

St. Stephen's food ministry seeks volunteers to serve as gleaners at the farmers market. Gleaners visit each of the market vendors and collect donations from them for the food pantry. This is the main source of fresh produce for the pantry, and a wonderful way to see the connections among different aspects of our community. Shifts are 11:30-12:30 every Saturday (you do not have to volunteer every week). Contact Anna Jones, [ajones@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:ajones@ststephensRVA.org).



## Affordable housing expert at Ladies Night Out

TUESDAY, APRIL 9 | 6 P.M.

The Women of St. Stephen's host a dinner each spring with a compelling speaker. This year it's Susan F. Dewey, executive director of Virginia Housing (formerly VHDA) from 1999 until her retirement at the end of 2023. Previously she served as Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Virginia and was an ex-officio Virginia Housing Commissioner. Virginia Housing is a \$9 billion independent, self-supporting authority addressing the statewide housing affordability needs of low- and moderate-income Virginians.

A reception begins at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:45 p.m., followed by our speaker, whose talk is titled, "The Power of Home." Advance reservations and payment are required at [ststephensRVA.org/LNO](http://ststephensRVA.org/LNO). Reservations close April 4 or sooner, if capacity is reached. (If you are not able to complete an online registration, please call or stop by the parish office.)



## Spring music gala: 'A Musical Bouquet'

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 17

We had such a wonderful time at the first spring music gala last year that we're doing it again! The concert features the many talents of St. Stephen's wonderful staff singers in ways we don't normally get to experience in worship. This year's spring-themed program, "A Musical Bouquet," includes music both serious and fun across a variety of genres. The evening begins with a reception outside Palmer Hall at 5:30 p.m., which will provide an opportunity to register for and peruse the many offerings of the silent auction. The 6 p.m. concert is followed by a festive supper in the courtyard. All proceeds from the evening support the upcoming choir pilgrimage to England. Tickets are available at [ststephensRVA.org/spring-gala](http://ststephensRVA.org/spring-gala). If you would like to donate an item for the auction, please contact Brent te Velde, [btevelde@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:btevelde@ststephensRVA.org).

## A low-key way to sing in one of our choirs

Do you love to sing, but can't commit to weeknight rehearsals? St. Stephen's Hymn Choir would love to have you. Once a month, volunteer singers join section leaders at our 9 a.m. Sunday service to lead hymns. The only rehearsal takes place at 8:15 a.m. just before the service. Details: Chris Edwards, [cedwards@ststephensRVA.org](mailto:cedwards@ststephensRVA.org).

